

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Hebrews 1: 1-3

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, we have come to our time of Bible reading again. Today, we are going to read Hebrews chapter 1, from verse 1 to verse 3.

The Book of Hebrews is a very unique epistle. It never mentions the writer or the recipients, but directly delves into the theme of the letter, which is the Son of God, Jesus Christ. The author seems to take us to the Mount of Transfiguration, where, upon seeing the true form of Jesus Christ, we naturally, like the three disciples who went up with Jesus, would experience what is written in Matthew 17:8, "When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only."

I hope that during our daily Bible reading time, we can set aside the distractions and temptations of the world and, with an unveiled face, simply look to Jesus Christ. If we can dedicate this time to God, He will surely bless us accordingly, enabling us to understand His word in the light and see the true face of Jesus Christ.

Verse 1: "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,"

God is a speaking God. He desires to engage in dialogue with humanity, so that people can come to know Him through His word. When God first created mankind, He placed them in the Garden of Eden, where they could converse directly with God. However, after the fall, man was driven out of Eden and away from God's presence. From that point on, dialogue between God and man required a mediator. Therefore, the scripture says, "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets." "Old times" refers to the period of the Old Testament. During that time, God spoke to His people through the prophets.

Prophets are individuals who seek God and become the mouthpieces of God's words. They speak on behalf of God and reveal His will. In every era of the Old Testament, God raised up prophets to convey His will and guidance for the people. If God could not find suitable vessels in a particular generation, His word would become rare. The time of the judges was a very dark period in Israel's history. 1 Samuel 3:1 records, "Now the boy Samuel ministered to the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no widespread revelation." Because the priest Eli had grown old and his two sons were wicked, God could not find a vessel for His word. He called Samuel, still a child, to speak His word. In the Old Testament, God spoke many times and in various ways through His prophets. This means that God used many prophets, at different times and in various circumstances, using many different methods to speak to the forefathers of Israel.

This verse highlights several key points. First, God desires to speak to His people, and thus raises up many prophets. Second, while the prophets were relatively spiritual and willing to cooperate with God, they were not perfect. They could only carry partial or specific messages from God, which is why many prophets were needed together to fulfill the mission of delivering God's word.

In the New Testament, God still uses different vessels to act as prophets and proclaim His word. Whether a church has abundant knowledge of God's word depends on how many saints are willing to serve as ministers of His word. Therefore, churches should encourage and provide opportunities for saints who are willing to practice and learn to be prophetic speakers.

Third, "various times and in various ways" speaks to the gradual nature of God's revelation. It was not a one-time event but something that occurred over time and in different methods. Because people's responses were often dull and their capacity to receive limited, God revealed the same message many times, in various ways, gradually.

Let's take an example: After man sinned, God began to reveal His redemption plan. The first revelation came in the Garden of Eden, immediately after the fall. It is

recorded in Genesis 3:15, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." This is God's judgment upon the serpent, specifically mentioning that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head, while the serpent would bruise His heel. The "seed of the woman" refers to Jesus Christ and indicates that Christ would be crucified, with nails piercing His heel.

Why is the seed of the woman referring to Christ? Because all humans are descendants of men, meaning they must have a father to be born. Only Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit through Mary, making Him the only one who is the seed of the woman. Next, in Genesis 3:21, "Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them." The tunics of skin foreshadow that Jesus Christ is the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. He became our righteousness, so that we could be justified by the Father, symbolized by the skins.

In Exodus 12, God established the Passover, which further revealed that Jesus Christ is the Passover Lamb. When the destroying angel saw the blood of the lamb, he passed over the house. This symbolized that through the precious blood of Jesus Christ, God can forgive our sins.

In Leviticus 1-5, the revelation of God's salvation became even more detailed. Jesus Christ is the sin offering, the trespass offering, the peace offering, the grain offering, and the burnt offering. Each offering contains many specific details of sacrifice, all of which were accomplished by Jesus Christ for us.

In Numbers 21, fiery serpents appeared among the people of Israel, and many were bitten and died. In Numbers 21:8-9, "Then the Lord said to Moses: Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live. So, Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole." When the people who were bitten looked at the bronze serpent, they lived. The bronze serpent hung on the pole is a symbol of Jesus Christ being nailed to the cross. Therefore, in John 3:14-15, it says, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."

Here we see that God's will was fulfilled in the New Testament, and the plan of salvation was completed. But God had already revealed His redemption plan in many ways and at various times in the Old Testament. Here we see how willing God is for people to understand His will.

Verse 2: "Has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds."

The record in verse 1 speaks of God's beautiful intention, and in verse 2, the phrase "has in these last days" speaks of the realization of God's will. "In these last days," or more directly translated, refers to today. Jesus' first coming completed the work of redemption, bringing grace and hope to humanity, and thus began the last days. These last days will continue until Jesus' second coming. The time between Jesus' first and second coming is commonly referred to as the last days, or it can also be called the age of grace or the church age.

During this time, people can be forgiven of their sins and receive eternal life by believing in Jesus Christ. The biggest difference between the last days and the ancient times is that God speaks to us directly through His Son. We no longer need an intermediary class to convey God's will. Instead, every believer can approach God directly through His Son, Jesus Christ, hear God's voice, and understand what He says. This is a remarkable advancement.

When Jesus Christ was fulfilling His mission on earth, He repeatedly told His disciples, as in John 14:26, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." Or in John 16:13, "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth." After Jesus died, was resurrected, and ascended to heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit, who now dwells within us. The Holy Spirit can teach us and guide us into all truth. Therefore, we no longer need an intermediary, as the Holy Spirit helps us recall everything God has spoken to us.

Dear brothers and sisters, you may ask, why is it that many times you still don't understand God's will? When you face decisions, it may still be unclear what God's guidance is. The root cause is that you have stored too little of God's word, and when you need it, it seems even the Holy Spirit can't help. This is why Paul encourages us in Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." On one hand, we need to store God's word richly in our hearts; on the other hand, God has also appointed ministers of the word in the church. They prophesy, not to invent new teachings, but to unpack God's word, making it easier for the saints to understand and store in their hearts. When you encounter difficulties, the Holy Spirit can help you remember God's word to meet your needs.

Next, from the second half of verse 2 to verse 3, the passage introduces the superiority of God's Son, Jesus Christ, beginning with God's eternal purpose. God had already appointed Him as the heir of all things. Jesus Christ is the heir of all things, which includes both the visible material world and the invisible spiritual world, including both God's old creation and new creation. In all of this, the Son of God is the center and culmination of God's eternal purpose. Everything that God is and does is for the Son and is ultimately to be returned to the Son. That is to say, Jesus Christ is the center of God, as well as the extension of God. While all of this has not yet come to pass, God has already appointed Christ as the heir of all things, and what God has appointed will surely come to pass.

God also made the worlds through Him. Jesus Christ is the medium through which God created. John 1:3 states, "All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made." Proverbs 8:26-30 gives a more detailed description, "While as yet He had not made the earth or the fields, or the primal dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I was there, when He drew a circle on the face of the deep, when He established the clouds above, when He strengthened the fountains of the deep, when He assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters would not transgress His command, when He marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside Him, as a master craftsman; and I was

daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." Here, it is clearly described that in creation, Christ was the architect.

Therefore, if we return to Genesis 1, which records the creation of God, the six days of creation were all carried out through God's speaking. God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God said, "Let there be..." and it came to be. God first defined what was to be, and then He spoke, and things came into being. God's speaking is God's revelation, and God's revelation is the second person of the Holy Trinity, the Son. Because Christ is the Word that was in the beginning, when God spoke, what God said was Christ. And when Christ came, everything became. Because all things were made through Him.

Verse 3: "Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

Christ is the Word spoken by God, and here the author further clarifies that Christ is the Son of God, highlighting His relationship with God. The way this is expressed is special and full of light and revelation. First, He is the brightness of God's glory. What is glory? God's glory is His manifestation, and this glory is so intense that human eyes cannot directly behold it. Thus, the Bible says that God dwells in unapproachable light, just like the sunlight is so strong that human eyes cannot directly gaze at it. Yet, the light of the sun, as it reaches the earth, becomes the source of light for the world.

If the saints go to the forest early in the morning and see the sunlight filtering through the gaps between the leaves, passing through the water vapor in the air, they can see soft beams of light, which make them feel warmth, brightness, and hope, without being burned by the scorching heat of the sun. In the same way, Christ is the brightness of God's glory, becoming God's outward manifestation. He is also the exact representation of God's being.

God's essence is spirit, so humans cannot see God, but Christ is the exact image of God's being, just as Colossians 1:15 says, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation." Humans cannot see God, but Christ is the image of God. When people see Christ, they see God. Therefore, in John 14:8-9, Philip said to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father." These two verses clearly tell us that when we see Christ, we see the Father. Christ is God; He is the second person of the Holy Trinity. He is the brightness of God's glory, the exact image of God's being.

Because He is God, today, the universe, with all its natural order and the movement of the seasons, operates in harmony because Christ upholds all things by the word of His power. The translation in the Chinese Union Version is somewhat subtle and may not clarify what the "全能的命令" truly means. The King James Version translates it directly as "upholding all things by the word of His power." Christ's words are full of great power, and this power maintains the universe as we know it, including gravity, electric fields, magnetic fields, and the forces between particles, including the strong and weak nuclear forces. The universal constants we have measured are maintained by Christ's all-powerful word, which ensures these constants have specific values. If Christ were to release His hold for even a moment, the entire universe would immediately collapse.

In these verses describing the transcendence of Jesus Christ, we see the past, present, and future of both the old creation and the new creation. In the past, the world was created through Christ; in the present, the world is sustained by His word; and in the future, everything will be fully reconciled to Christ. At the same time, we also see the past, present, and future of the new creation. In the past, Jesus Christ has already come, and He, as the Lamb of God, shed His precious blood on the cross to cleanse humanity from sin, granting eternal life to those who believe. Through Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, the new creation began. This is the past.

In the present, He has completed the great work of redemption, ascended to heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high, beginning His heavenly ministry. As we continue to read Hebrews in the coming weeks, we will gradually

understand more about Jesus Christ's heavenly ministry. For example, in Hebrews 4:14-16, "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Here, we see that He is in heaven, seated at the right hand of the Father, fulfilling His high priestly role. In Hebrews 7:25, He further declares, "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." Today, Jesus is in heaven, fulfilling His heavenly ministry, interceding for us.

In the future, when Jesus Christ returns, He will be the heir of all things. This is what Ephesians 1:10 says, "That in the dispensation of the fullness of the times, He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth." At Christ's return, all the old and new creation will be reconciled in Christ. The author of Hebrews uses three verses to describe the transcendence of Jesus Christ, revealing that He is the center of God's will and the conclusion of God's work. He is fulfilling His heavenly high priestly role today, and how blessed we are.

Let us pray together: Lord, bless our time as we continue reading Hebrews. Let us truly see Your transcendence. What You are and what You have done is already complete. If we stand in the realm of grace and receive Your provision, we can live a life that pleases You. Continue to speak to us. We pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.